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A DROID ADVENTURE

By Bonnie Bogart
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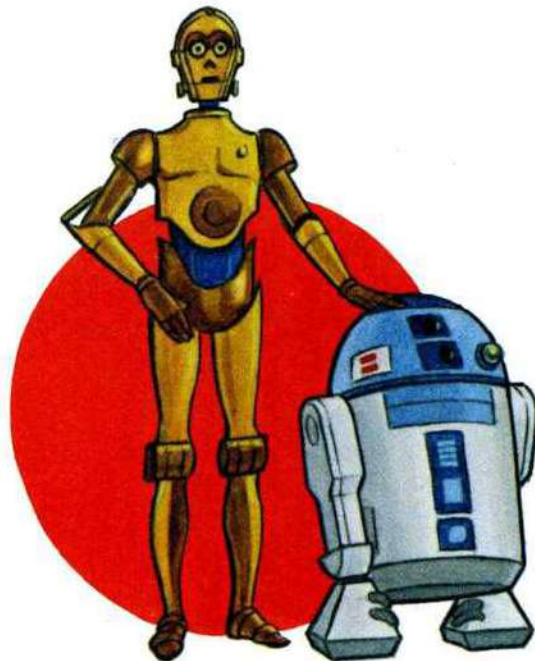


Random House

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A DROID ADVENTURE

**By Bonnie Bogart
Illustrated by Amador
Based on a story by Ben Burt
Screenplay by Michael Reaves**



RANDOM HOUSE  NEW YORK

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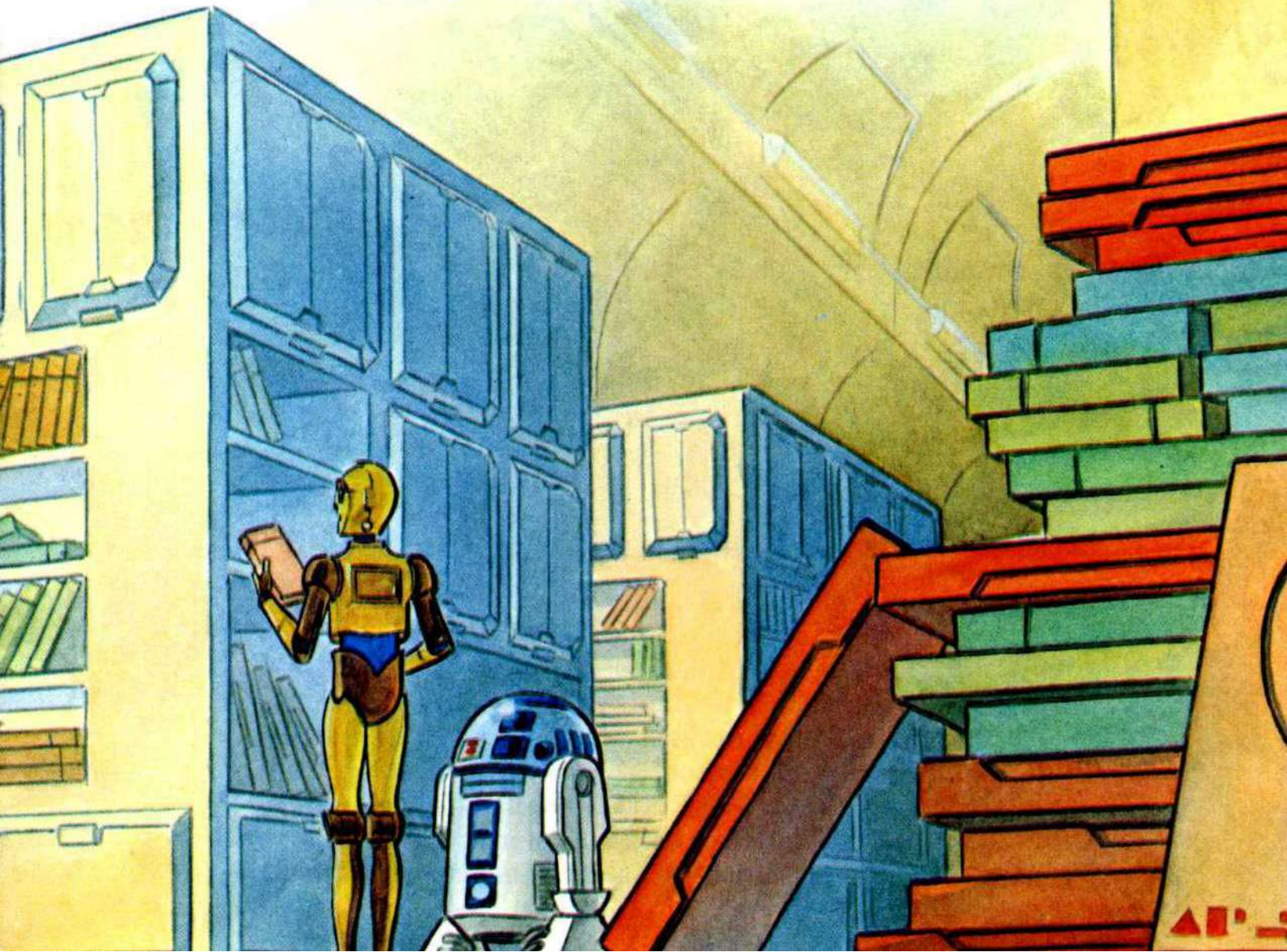
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R2-D2 and C-3PO had a new master named Mungo Baobab. Mungo was the son of a struggling merchant, and he worked for his father's trading company on the planet Manda. But Mungo was not content to be a merchant—more than anything else, he loved adventure.



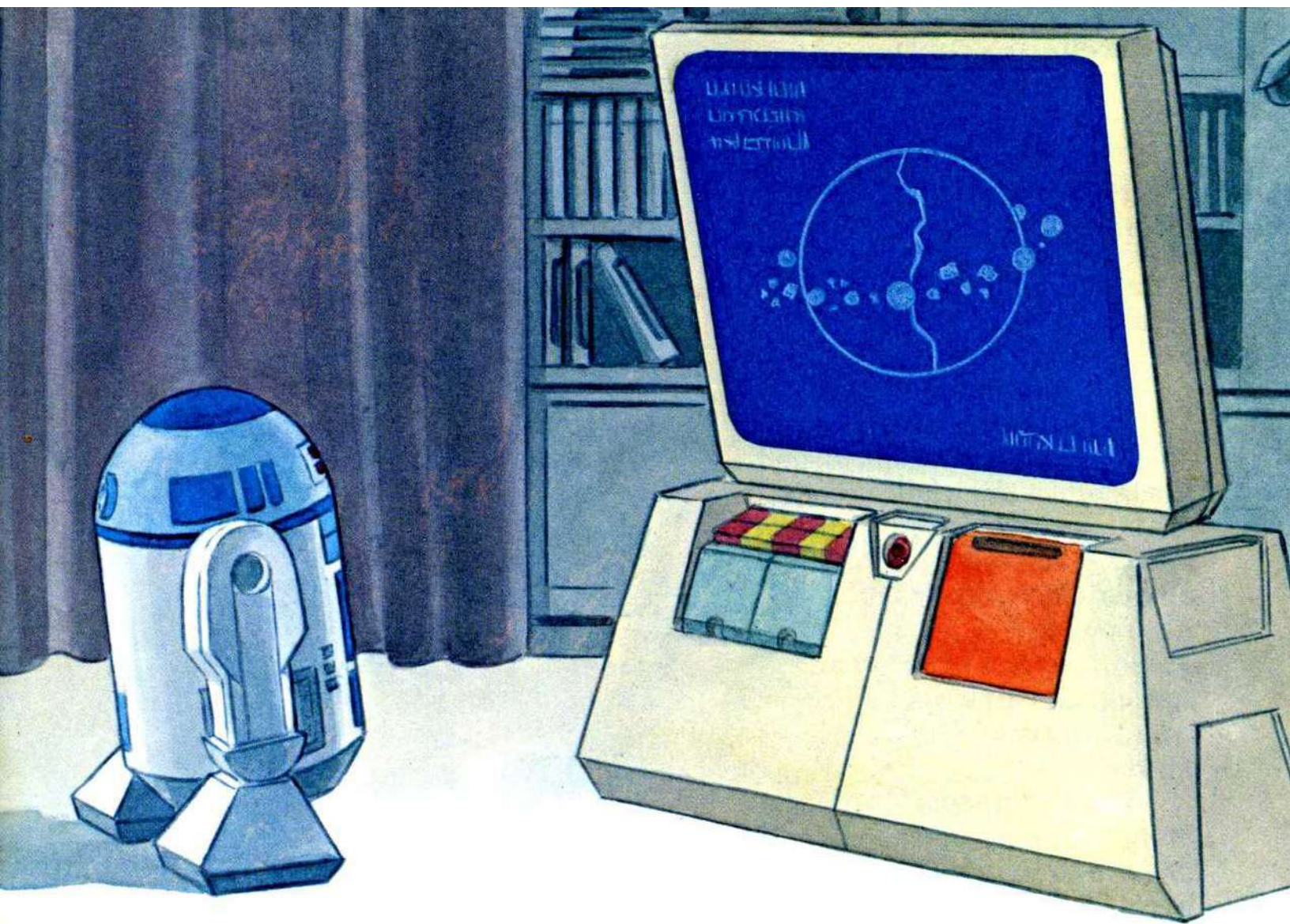
Mungo's latest quest was a search for the legendary Roon System. He had heard many stories of the fantastic riches to be found there—flame jewels, spice, carbonite—and he wanted to open a trade route between his planet and the Roon System. After scouring the Baobab Archives for days, he finally found what he was looking for—a holotape of a map of the Roon System!





Artoo and Threepio watched in their master's chambers as Mungo studied the holoprojection on the screen.

"There it is!" Mungo cried. "The Roon System!" On the screen was a holograph of a planet surrounded by a belt of moonlets and asteroids. The planet was divided into two halves—one of eternal day and one of eternal night.



"All we have to do is follow the orbit of the Rainbow Comet into the Cloak of the Sith—and it should lead us straight to Roon!" Mungo checked his timekeeper. "There's just enough time to present my plan to the Merchant Council meeting. Let's go!"

Mungo dashed off to the Merchant Council chambers, followed closely by Arttoo. Threepio lagged behind. "This plan sounds like trouble, if you ask me," he said. "But, of course, no one's asking me. . . ."

Artoo and Threepio waited for Mungo outside the Merchant Council chambers. At last Mungo emerged from the meeting, hanging his head.

"Master, what happened?" asked Threepio.

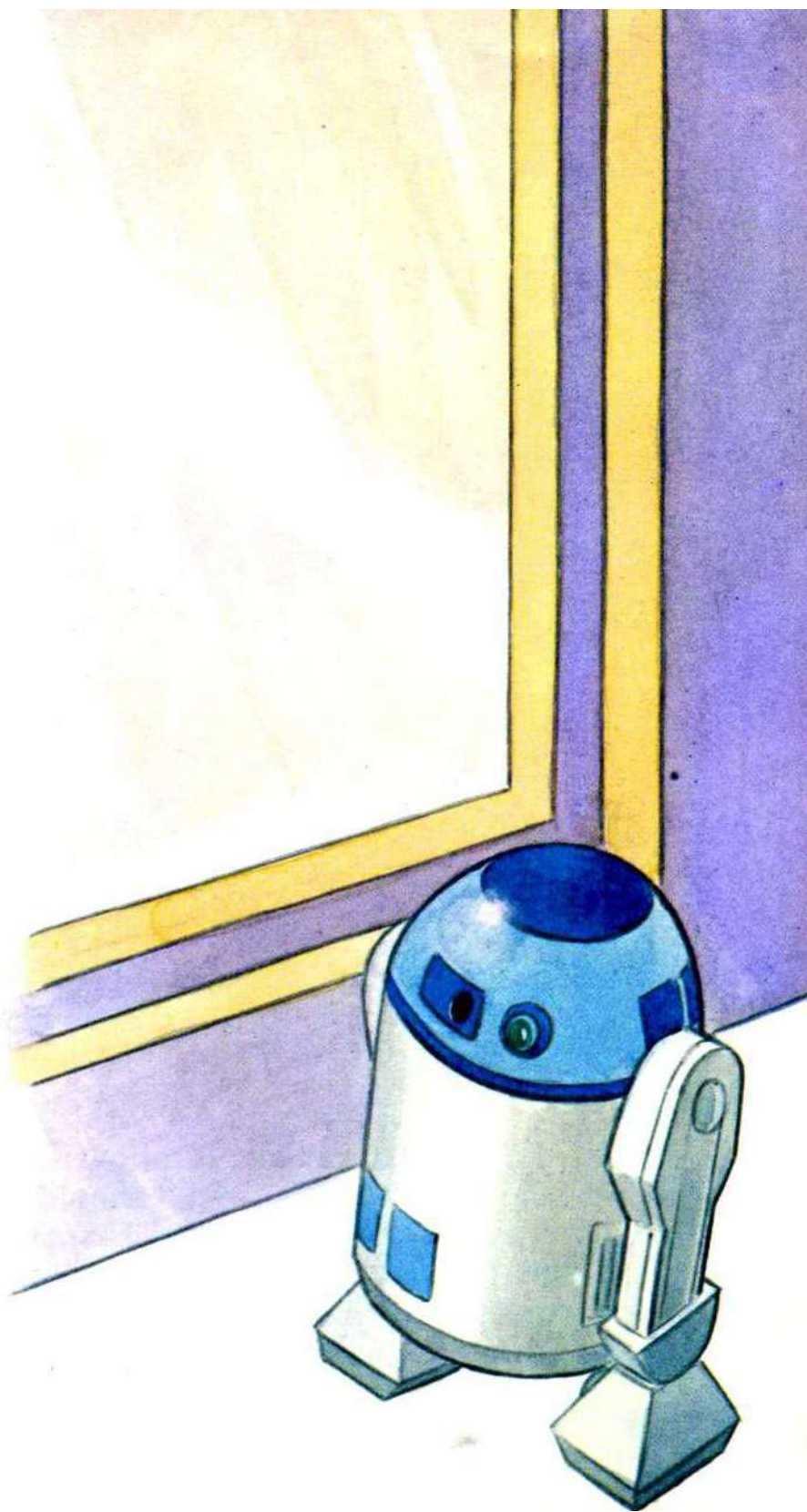
"They don't understand," said Mungo. "My father's company is about to go out of business, and it will affect the whole economy of Manda! If I can be the first to open a trade route to Roon, we'll all be rich! But the council says it's too risky."

"So we won't be doing any space travel after all, right?" asked Threepio. "Praise the Maker!"

"Wrong, Threepio," said Mungo. "We have to go on a mission to Hrill instead of Roon."

"Oh, no!" cried Threepio in disgust. "More space travel! All we ever do around here is travel, travel, travel!"

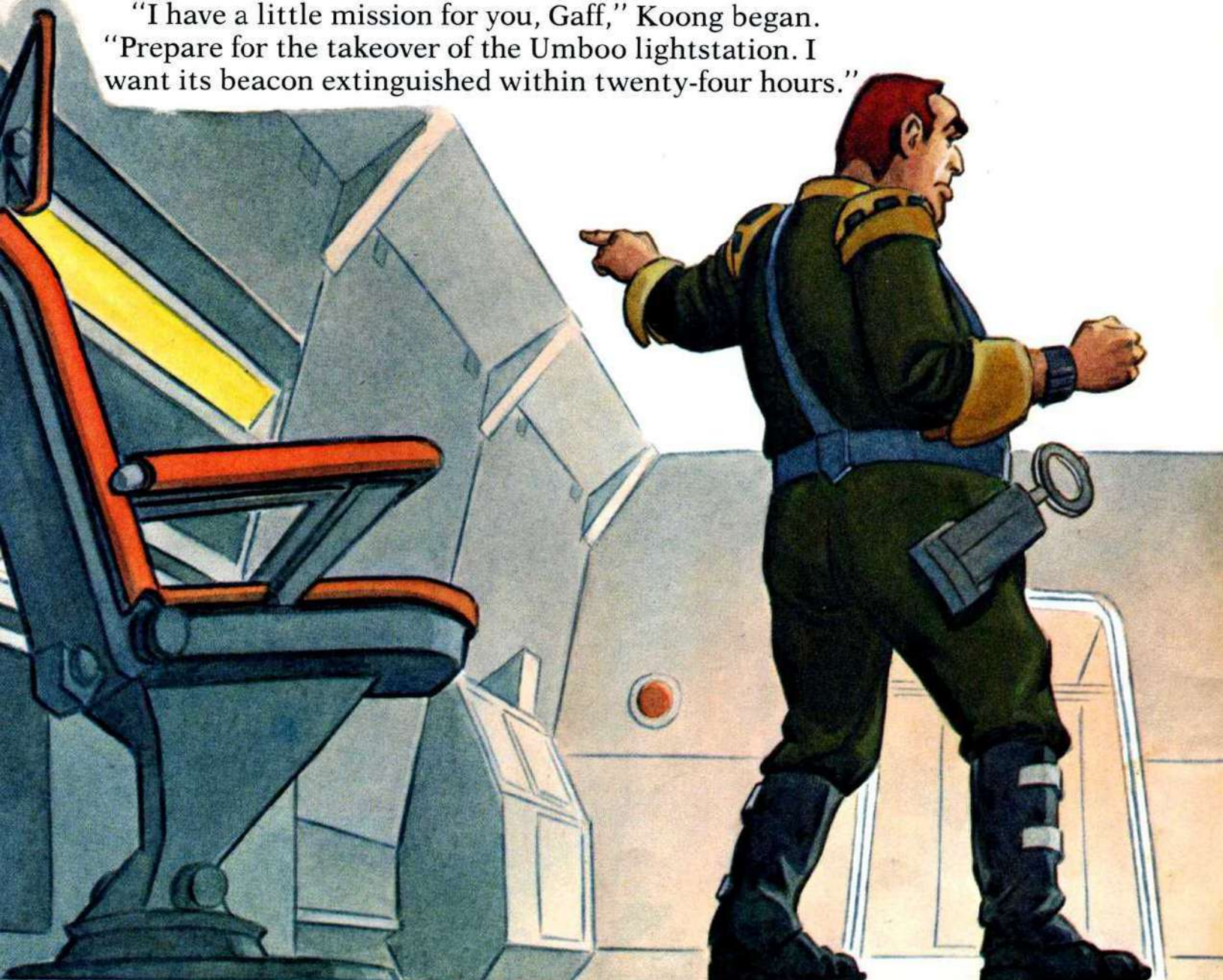
Artoo blipped his disappointment too. Hrill was a quiet, dull planet. Roon would have been a lot more fun.





While Mungo prepared for his trip to Hriil, changes were taking place on Roon. Governor Koong sat in his ship anchored just off the planet, scheming. He called for Gaff, his foreman. Gaff was a tall, brown insectoid alien with three eyes—two in the front and one in the back of his head.

"I have a little mission for you, Gaff," Koong began. "Prepare for the takeover of the Umboo lightstation. I want its beacon extinguished within twenty-four hours."



"It won't be easy, Governor," said Gaff. "The lightstation is vital to the Roon trade routes. There will be resistance."

"I don't care how you do it, Gaff," said Koong. "Just take over that lightstation."

"Yes, sir!"



Meanwhile, Mungo's small ship, the *Caravel*, had just taken off for Hrrill. The droids were miserable.

"Oh, I hate space travel!" Threepio complained. "At least Hrrill is a nice, quiet planet, from what I've heard."

"That's true," Mungo said with a grin. "But we're not going to Hrrill."

Threepio panicked. "There must be something wrong with my audioreceptors!" he said. "I thought you said we're not going to Hrrill!"

"I did," said Mungo. "Artoo, compute a course to the Roon System."

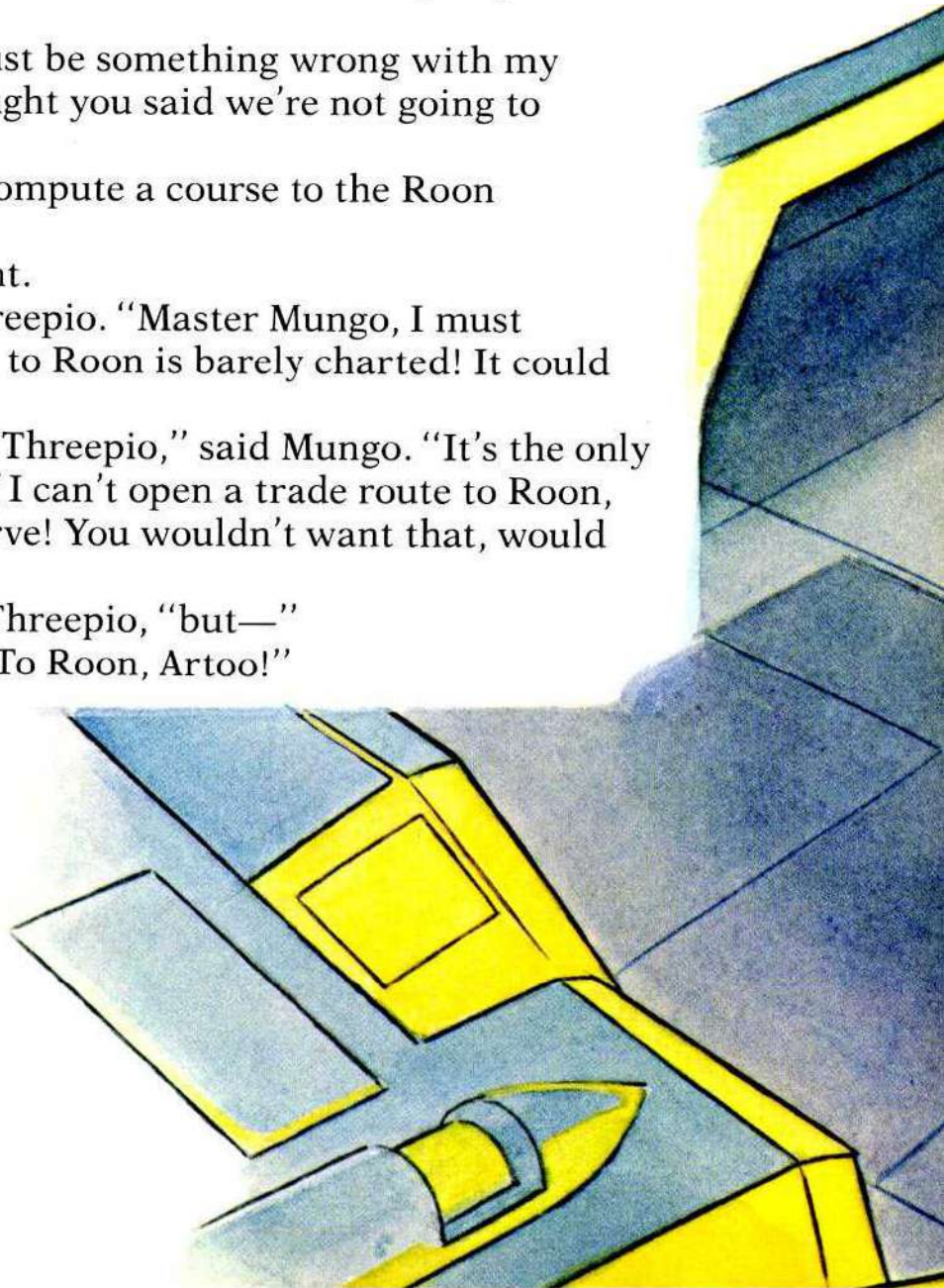
Artoo whistled with excitement.

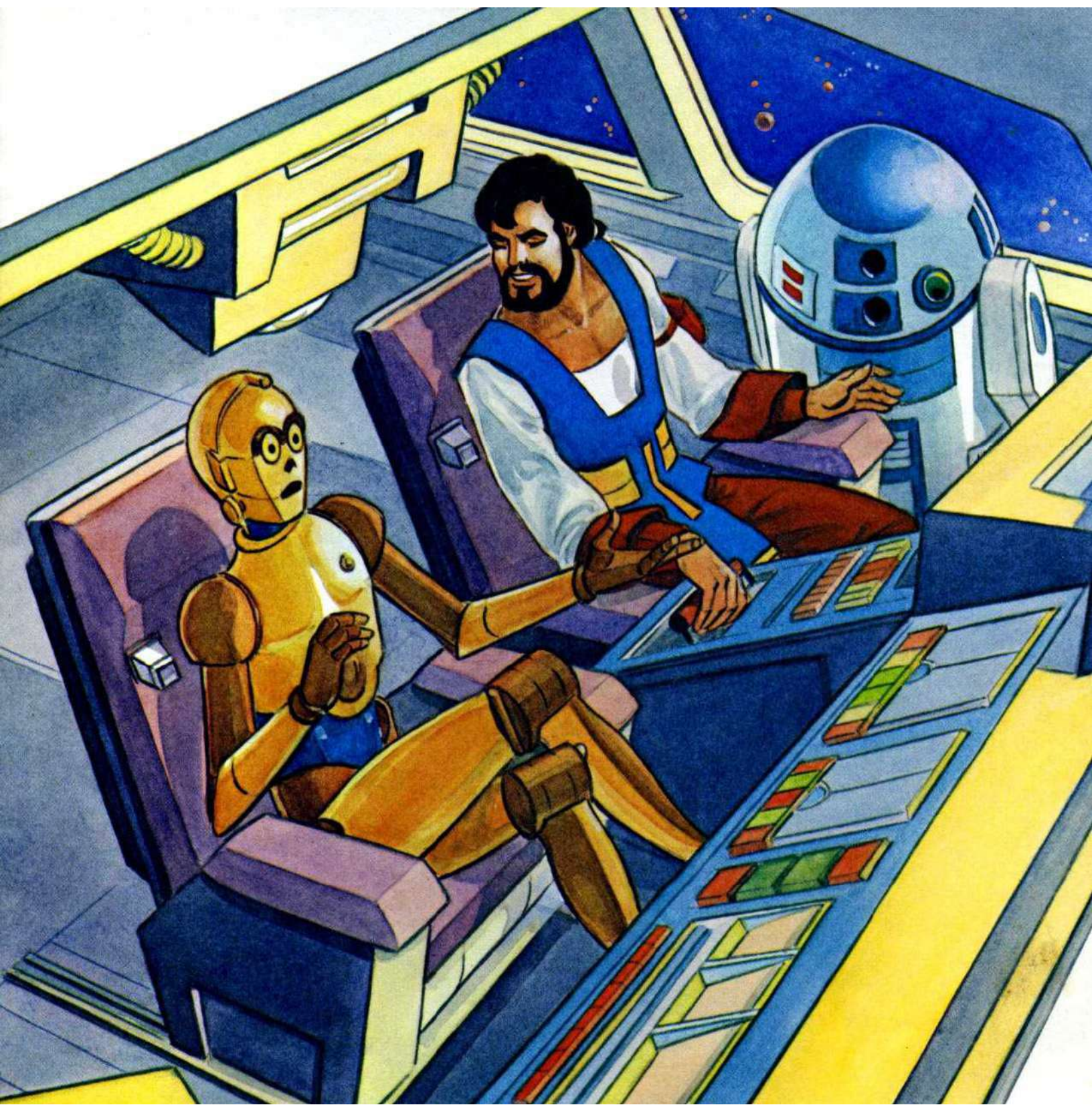
"The Roon System!" cried Threepio. "Master Mungo, I must strongly protest this! The course to Roon is barely charted! It could be very dangerous!"

"That's a risk I'll have to take, Threepio," said Mungo. "It's the only way to save Manda's economy. If I can't open a trade route to Roon, we'll all suffer—maybe even starve! You wouldn't want that, would you?"

"Of course not, master," said Threepio, "but—"

"Say no more!" said Mungo. "To Roon, Artoo!"



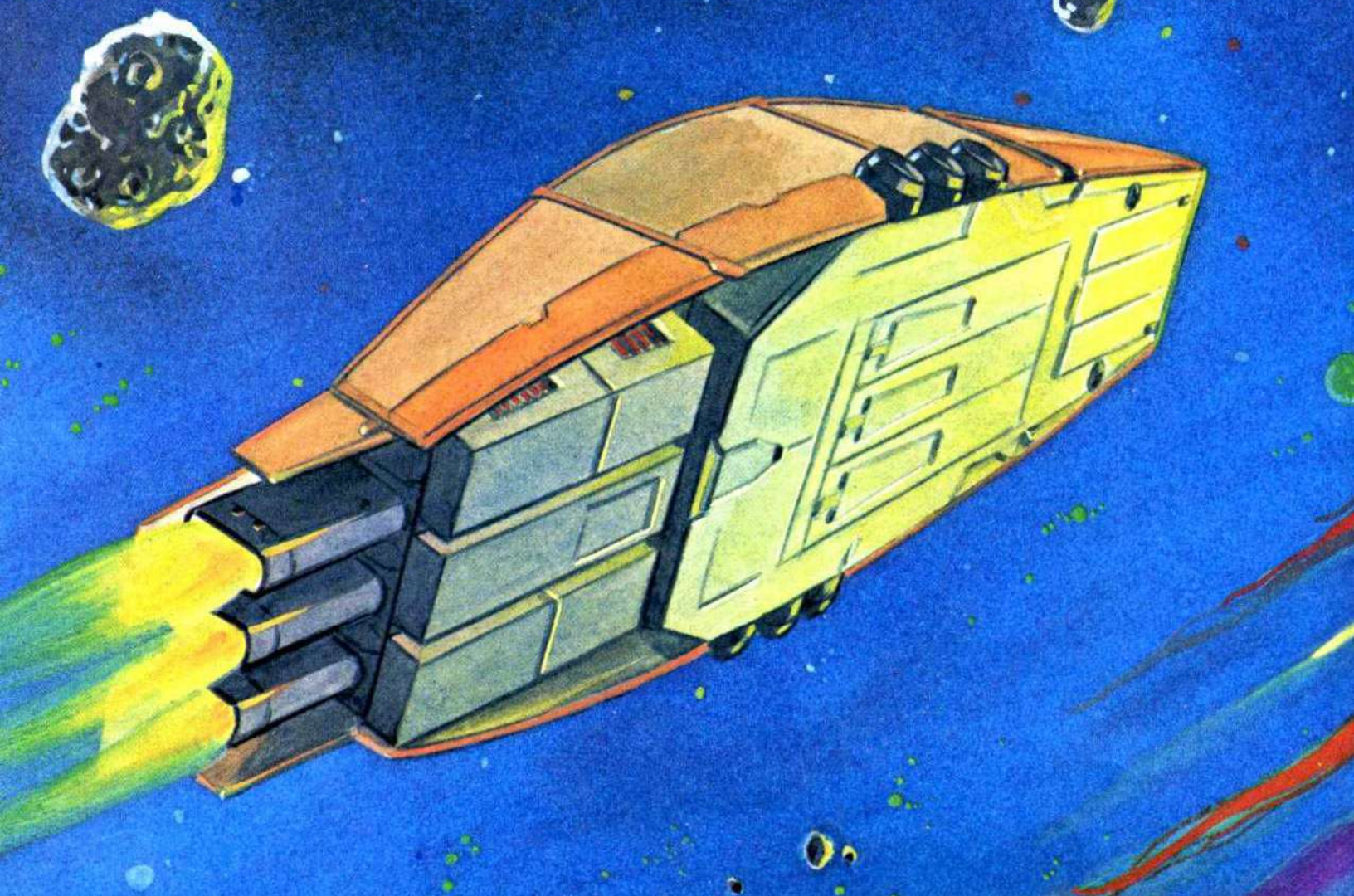


As Mungo and Artoo changed the course of the starship, an arc of multicolored light came into view—the Rainbow Comet. Mungo followed the tail of the comet into a dark gas cloud full of treacherous asteroid shoals.

“If we hit one of those shoals, we’ll be crushed to bits!” cried Threepio.

“But we won’t hit them,” said Mungo. “The comet’s light is leading us through them safely. That’s the beauty of this plan!”

The clouds of gas and dust got thicker and darker. Soon even the blazing light of the Rainbow Comet was hidden.





Suddenly Mungo and the droids saw a strange new light on the viewscreen.

"Could that be the Umboo lightstation?" Mungo wondered.

"I don't think so, master!" said Threepio. "Look!"

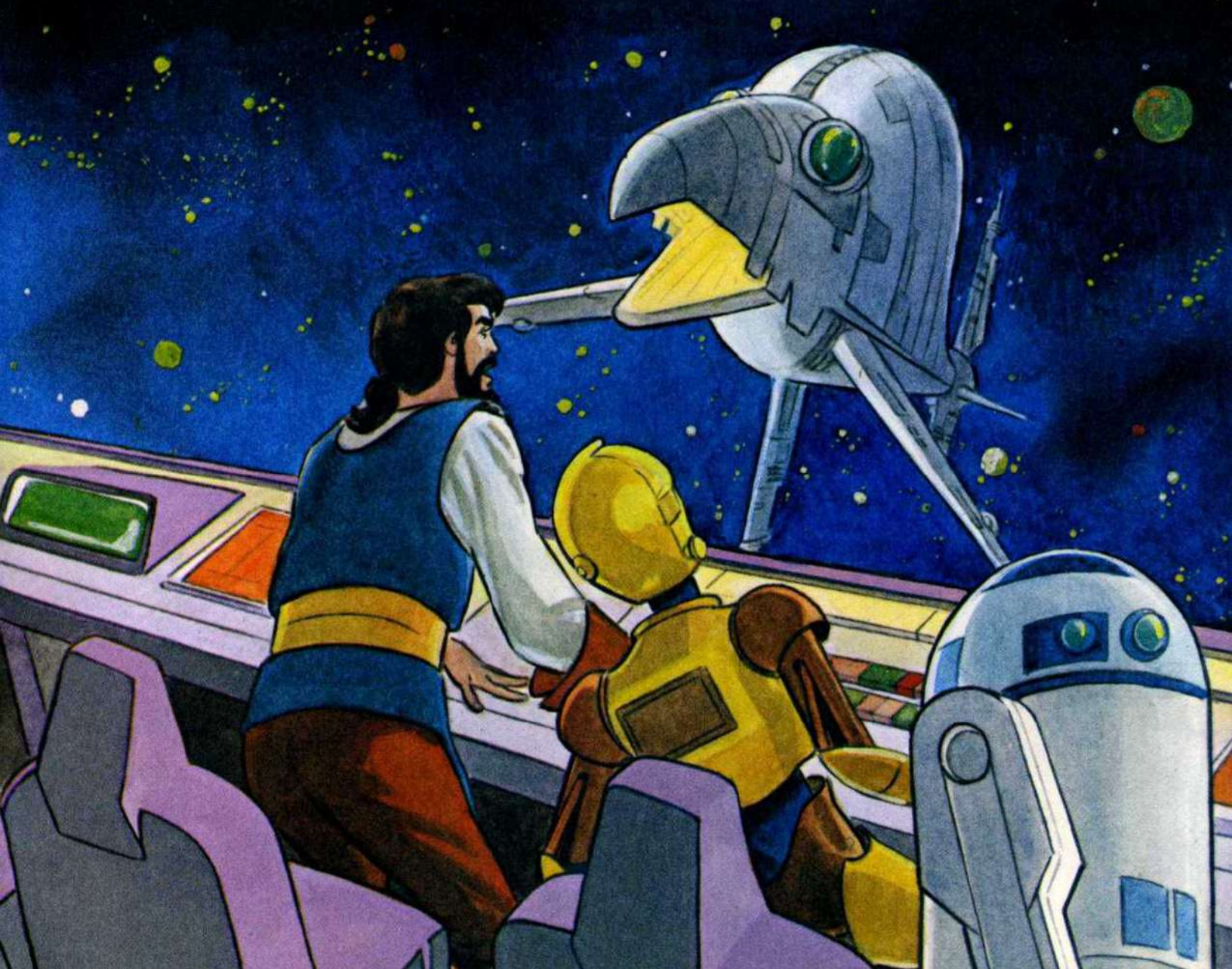
The new light was coming from the glowing eyes of what looked like a gigantic flying dinosaur. Slowly its huge jaws opened. Light spewed from its mouth like dragon fire.



Artoo gave a frightened beep. "My sentiments exactly, Artoo!" said Threepio.

Suddenly the *Caravel* jolted. Mungo worked the control panel, but it was no use—the ship was being pulled off course!

"Whatever this thing is," said Mungo, "it's got us in a tractor beam! We're being pulled into its mouth!"



The *Caravel* landed on a platform inside the monster's mouth. When Mungo saw workmen moving crates of cargo on catwalks, he realized that the monster was actually a giant spaceship.

Two guards forced open the hatch of the *Caravel* and dragged Mungo and the droids out. The guards brought them before a burly man in a dress uniform and a military man with a patch over one eye.

"Remember," whispered Mungo to the droids, "just keep calm and let me do the talking."

"Who are you?" barked the burly man. It was Governor Koong.



"I am Mungo Baobab, from the Baobab Merchant Fleet on Manda," said Mungo. "We're here to open a trade route—"

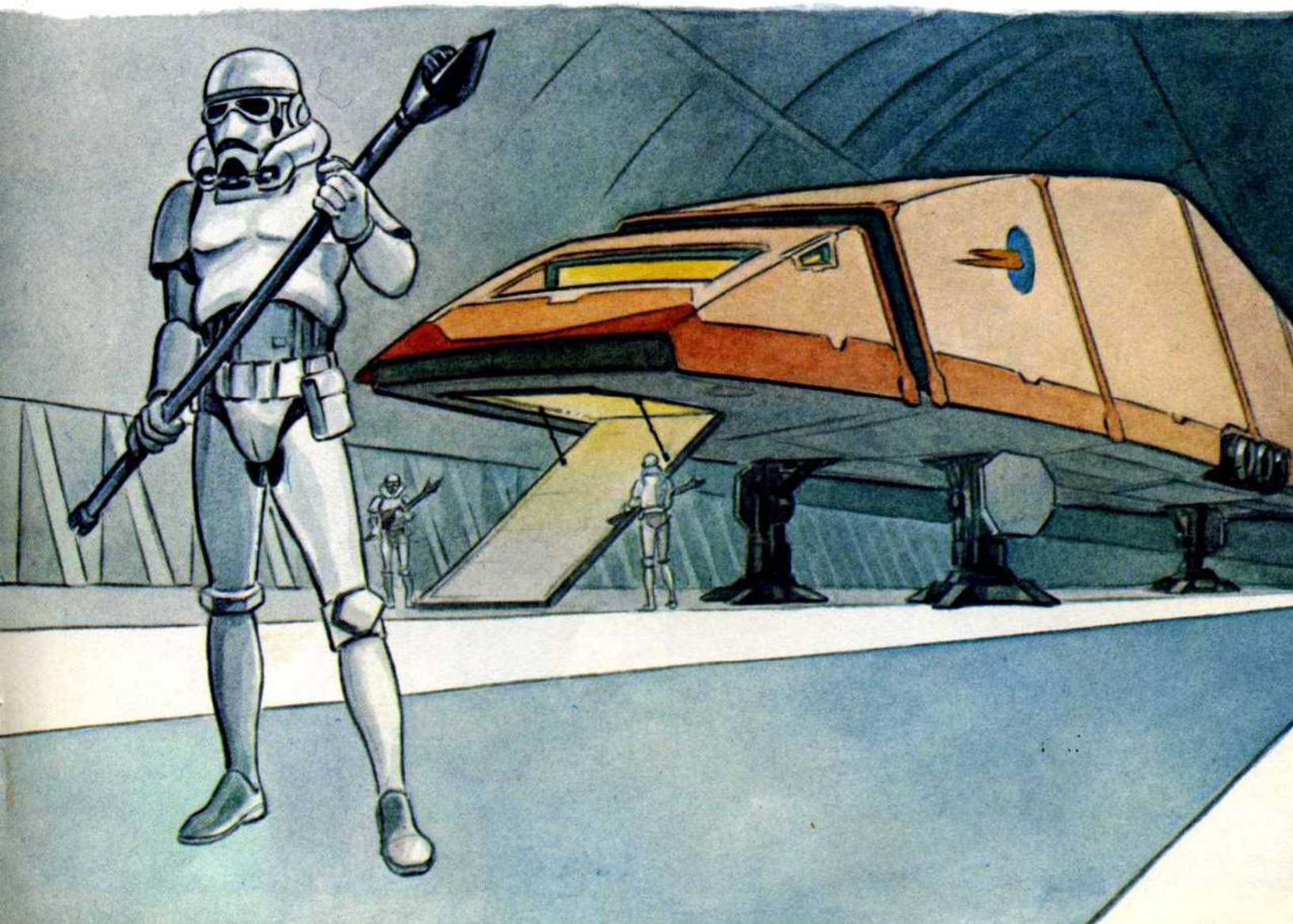
"Imprison him!" ordered Governor Koong.

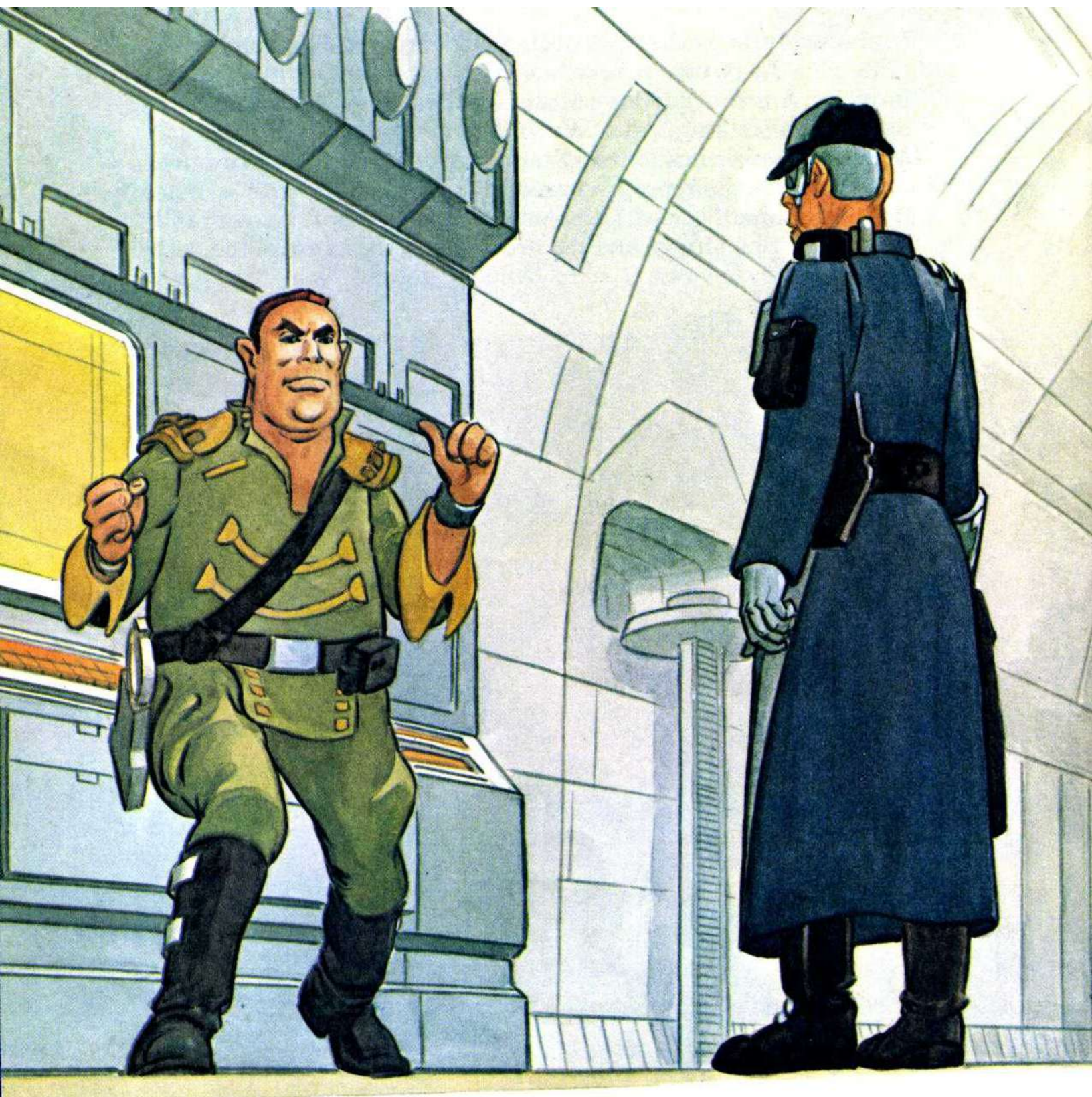
"So much for talking," said Mungo.

"And put those droids to work!" continued Koong. "That protocol droid will need to be reprogrammed."

"Reprogrammed!" cried Threepio in horror. "Help!"

The guards took Mungo and the droids off to the cargo hold.





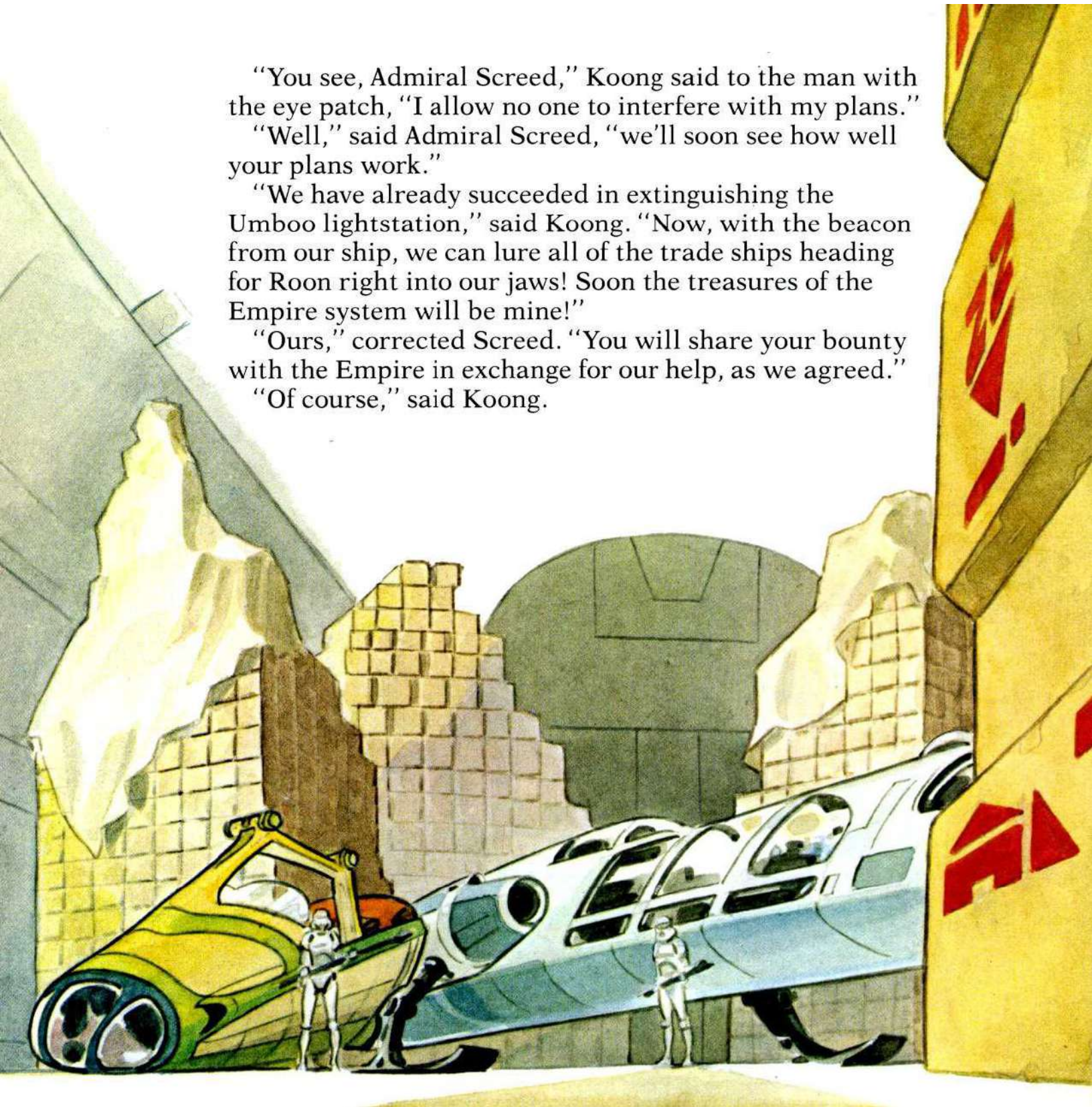
"You see, Admiral Screed," Koong said to the man with the eye patch, "I allow no one to interfere with my plans."

"Well," said Admiral Screed, "we'll soon see how well your plans work."

"We have already succeeded in extinguishing the Umboo lightstation," said Koong. "Now, with the beacon from our ship, we can lure all of the trade ships heading for Roon right into our jaws! Soon the treasures of the Empire system will be mine!"

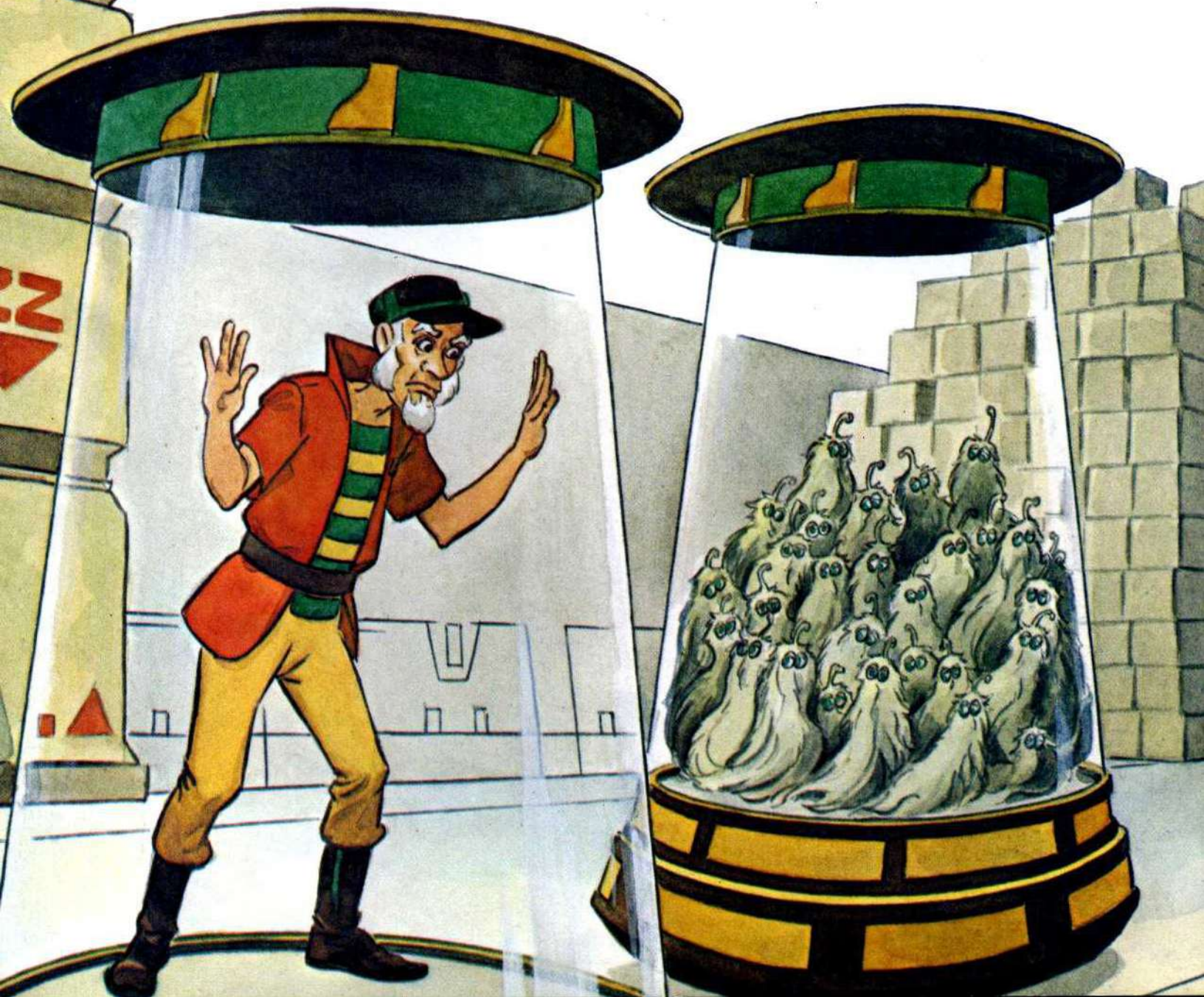
"Ours," corrected Screed. "You will share your bounty with the Empire in exchange for our help, as we agreed."

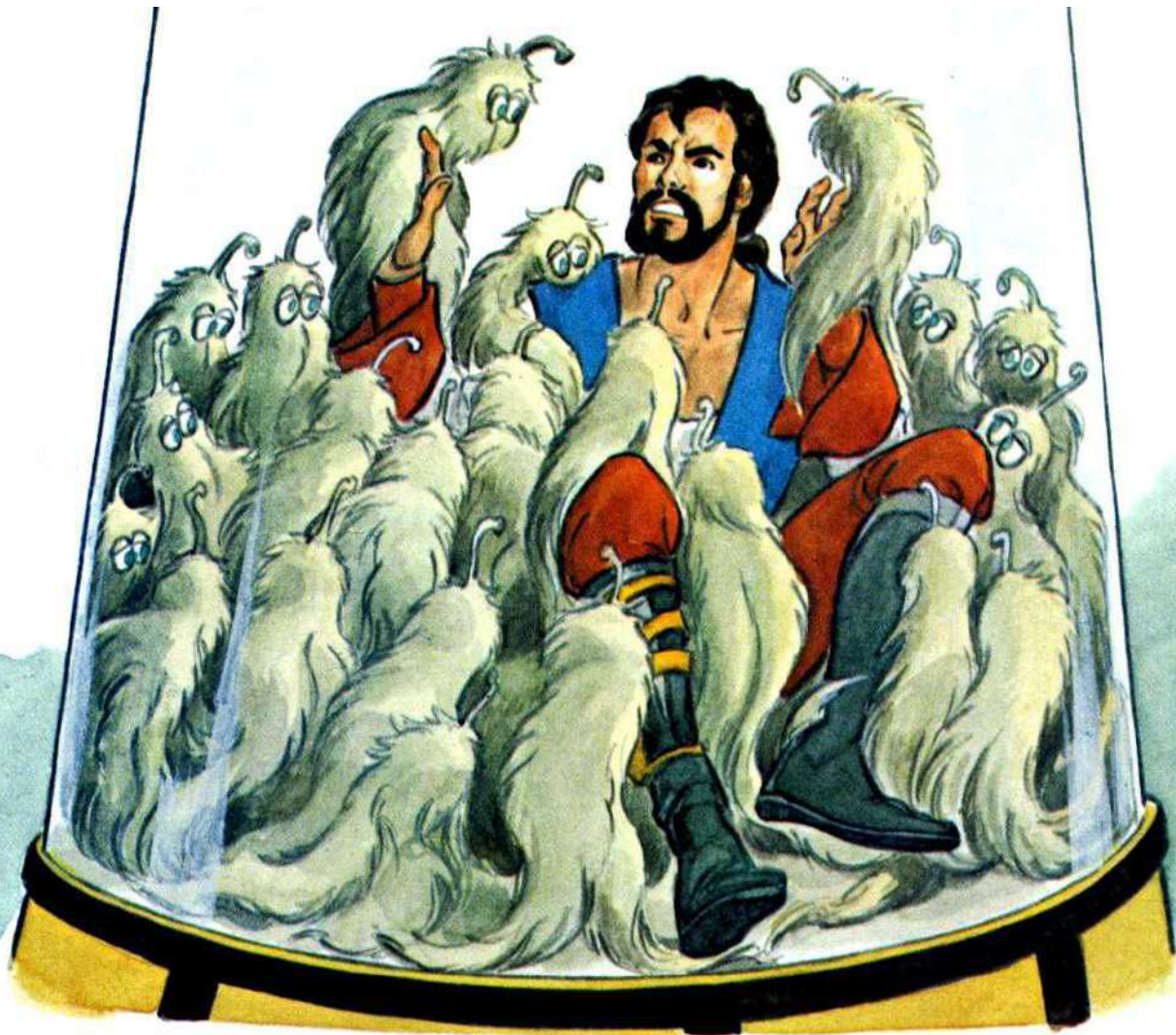
"Of course," said Koong.



The cargo hold was full of pirated goods and captured spaceships. In the center stood two cages. One cage held an old man. The other contained dozens of small, furry creatures called mupples.

Gaff, Koong's foreman, was supervising the labor droids when the guards brought Mungo, Threepio, and Artoo before him.





"Throw this one into the mupple cage," said Gaff, pointing to Mungo. "Prepare the protocol droid for re-programming! And this R2 unit can pull a hoverdolly."

The guards put Mungo into the cage, and the mupples immediately surrounded him and began to snuggle and lick him.

"Yuck!" cried Mungo as he tried to brush the mupples off. "Shoo! Scat!"

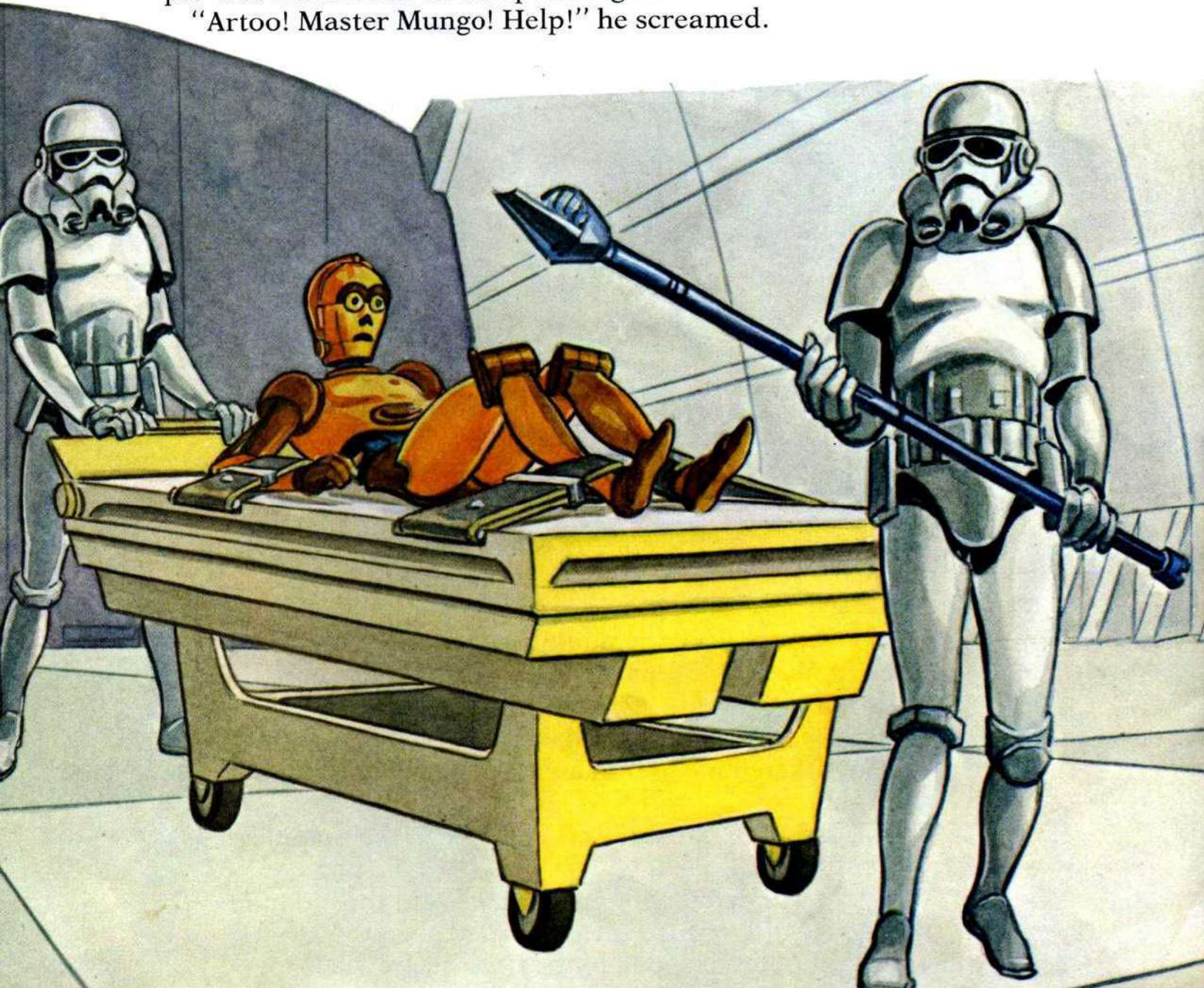
"Here's how to handle mupples, boy," said the old man in the cage next to Mungo's. He whistled a slow, hypnotic tune. The mupples dropped to the floor and fell asleep.

"Thanks," said Mungo to the old man. "What are *you* in for?"

"I'm Noop Yeldarb," said the man. "I used to be lightkeeper of the Umboo lightstation, until Koong and his thugs took it over."

While Noop and Mungo talked, Artoo pulled a hoverdolly loaded with mupple feed back and forth through the hold. Suddenly Three-pio was wheeled in on an operating table.

"Artoo! Master Mungo! Help!" he screamed.

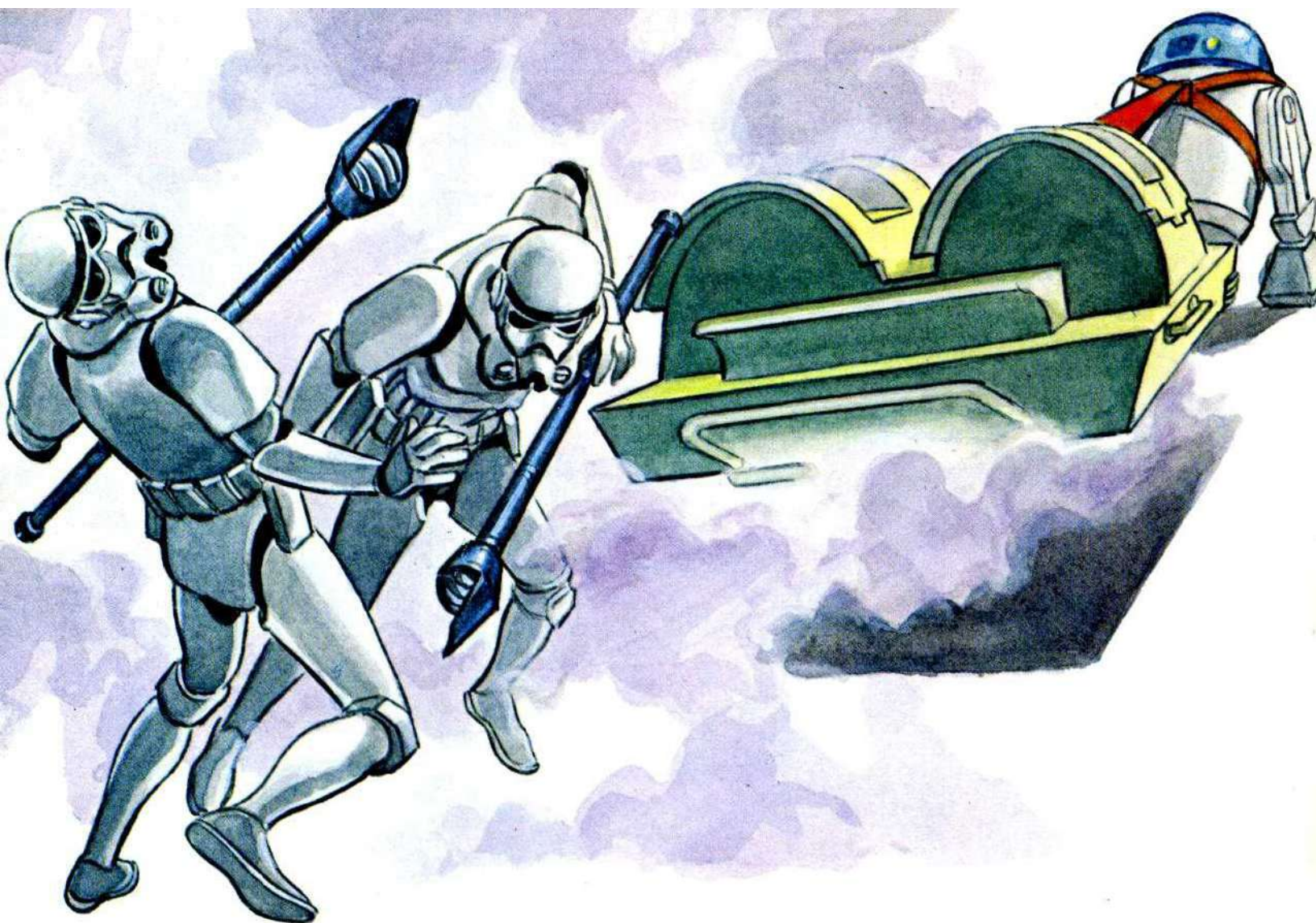


"Threepio!" cried Mungo. "I'm sorry! If only I'd obeyed my father's orders—"

"I must say, Master Mungo," said Threepio, "it's a little late now to realize the error of your ways!"

Gaff smiled evilly. "Don't worry," he said, "he'll have plenty of time to regret it!"





The heavy hoverdolly seemed to be getting harder and harder for Artoo to pull. Finally he stopped near two guards at Mungo's cage.

"Move it, droid!" yelled one of the guards.

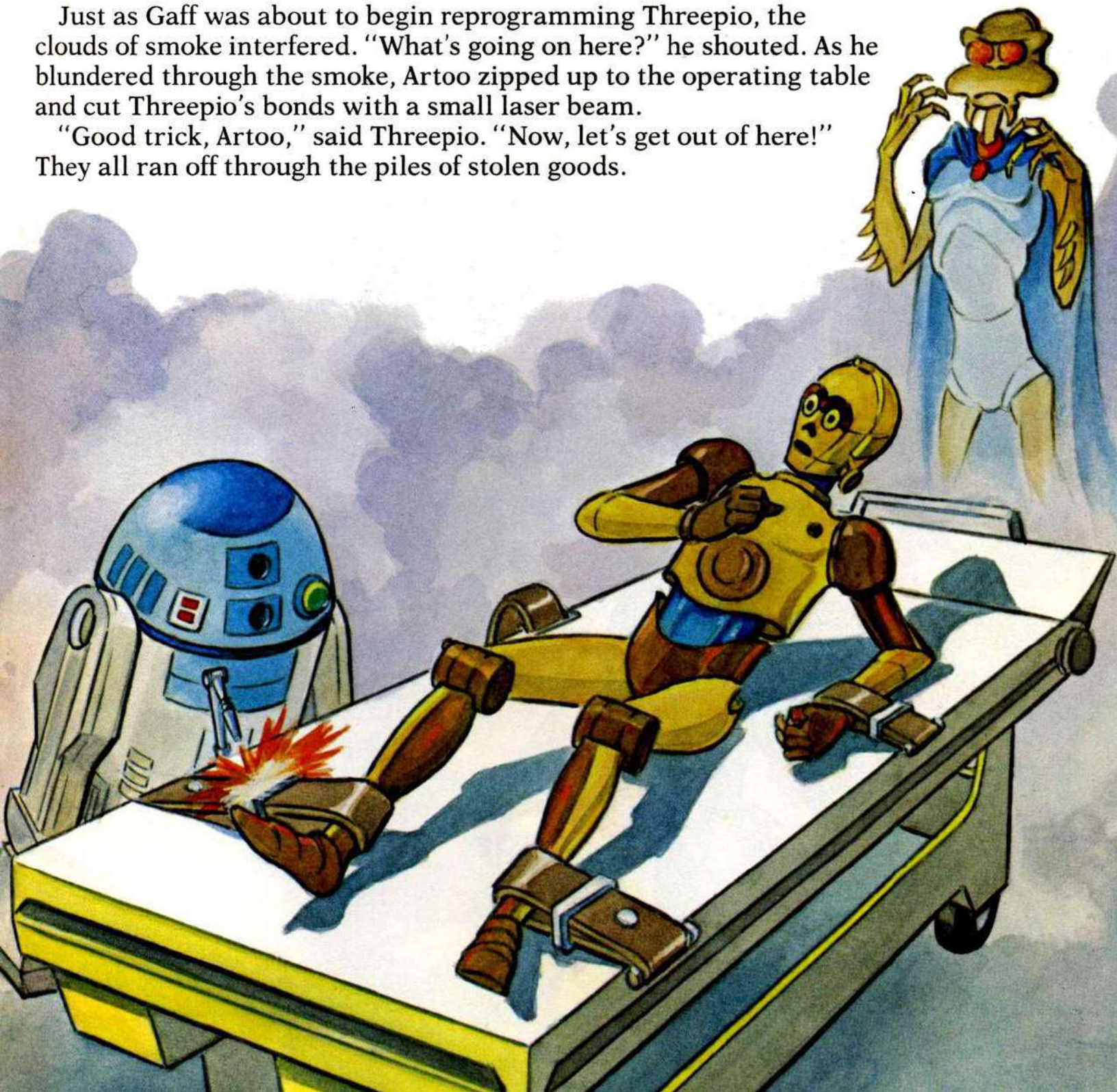
Artoo strained to pull the hoverdolly. Smoke began to pour out of his vents.

"Hey!" said the guard. "I think he blew a fuse!"

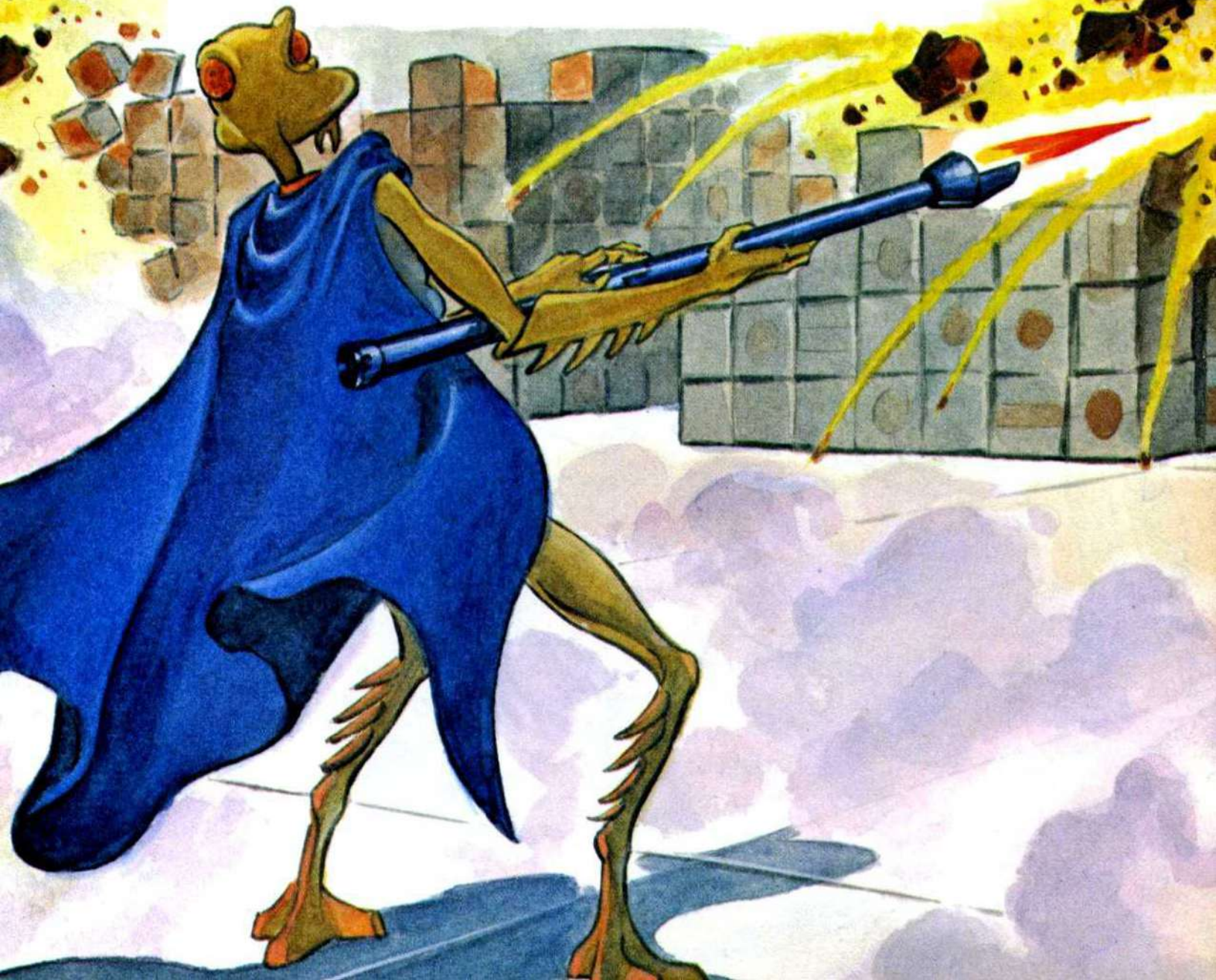
The guards coughed as smoke billowed through the cargo hold. No one noticed as Artoo slipped over to the cages and released Mungo, Noop, and the mupples.

Just as Gaff was about to begin reprogramming Threepio, the clouds of smoke interfered. "What's going on here?" he shouted. As he blundered through the smoke, Artoo zipped up to the operating table and cut Threepio's bonds with a small laser beam.

"Good trick, Artoo," said Threepio. "Now, let's get out of here!" They all ran off through the piles of stolen goods.



As the smoke began to clear, Gaff saw what was going on. "Stop them!" he shouted. "They're getting away!" He grabbed a force pike from one of the guards and aimed it at Mungo, Noop, and the droids. The blast hit a pile of cargo. The cargo blew up and toppled to the floor.

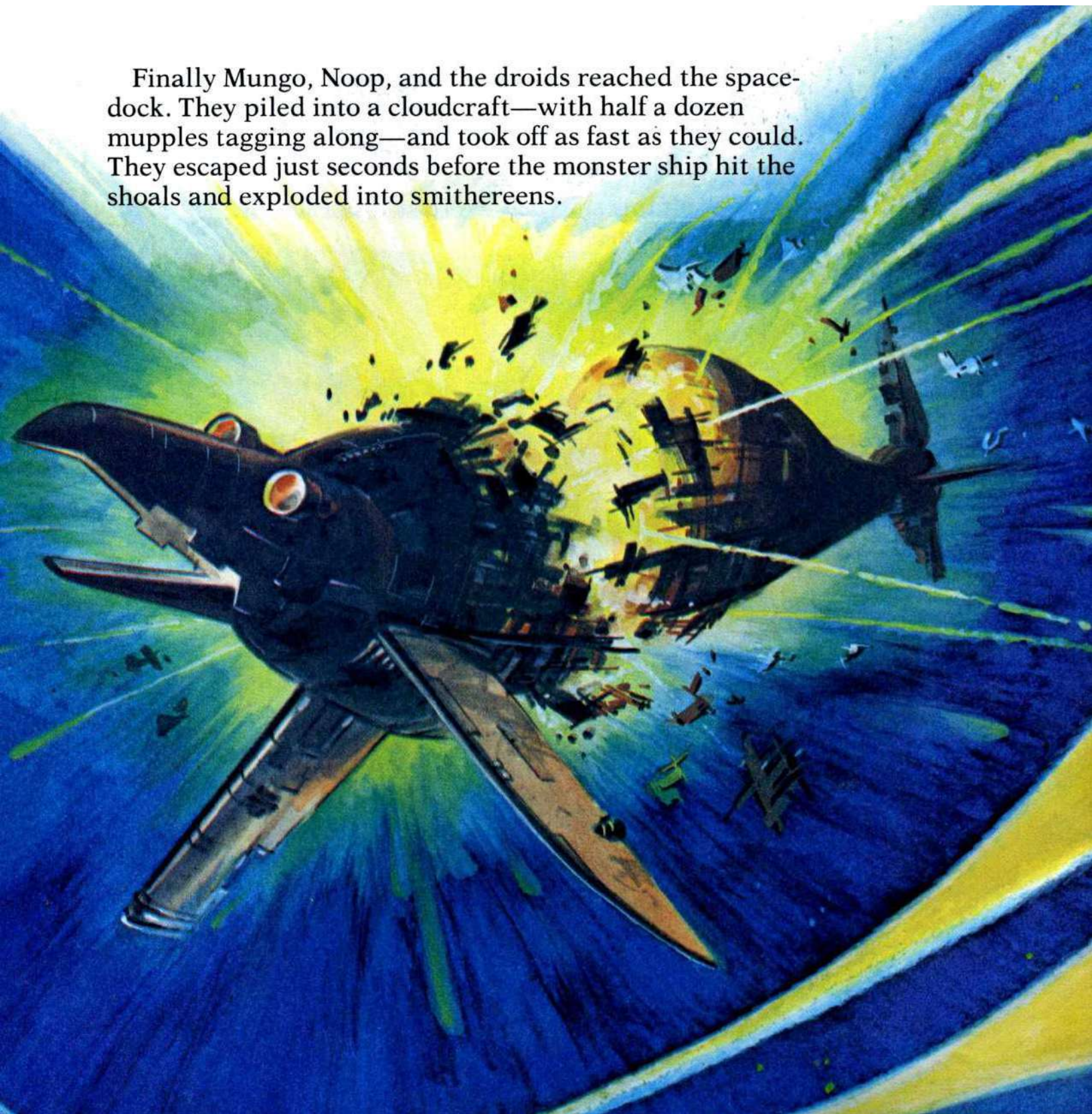


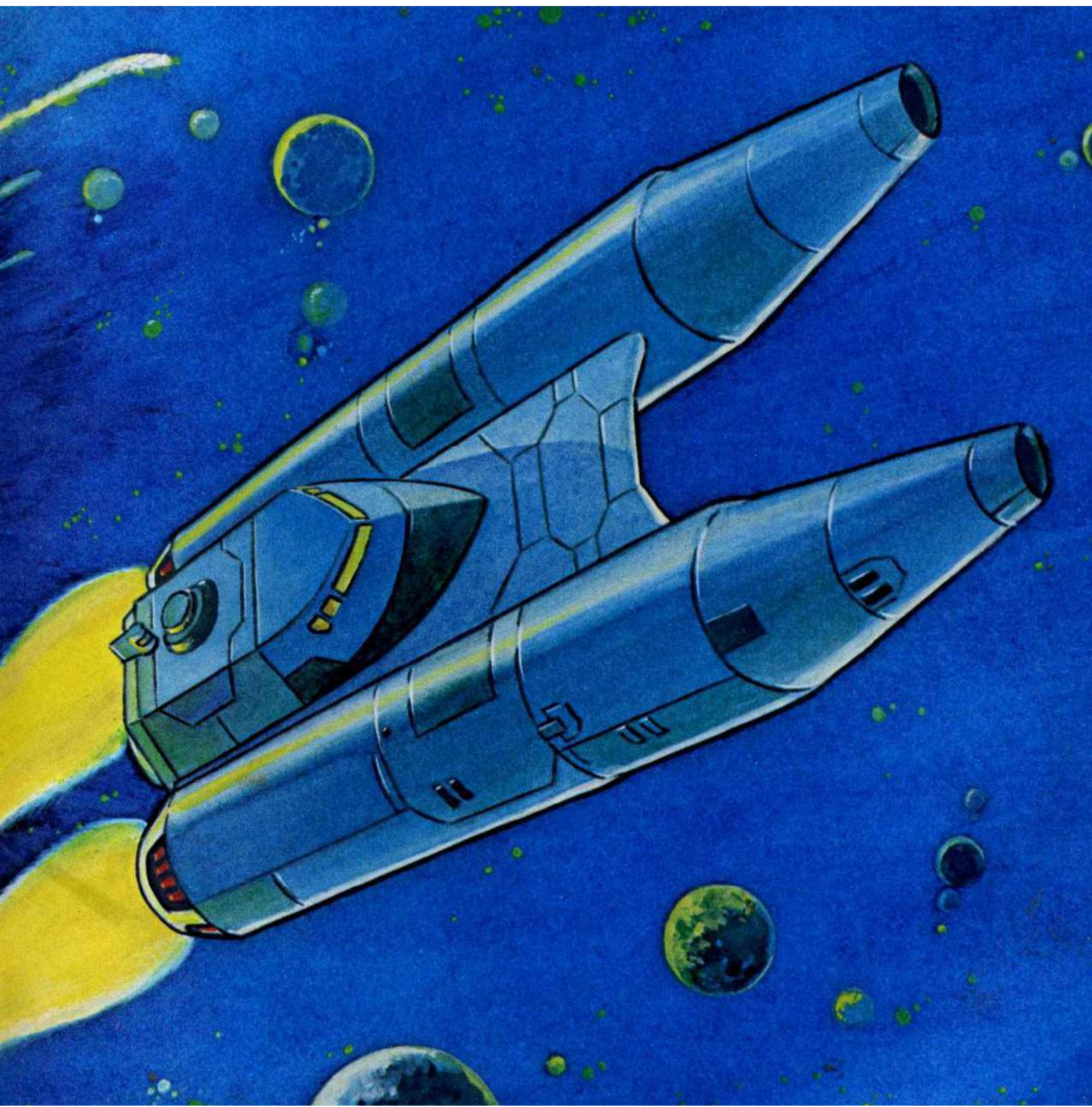
Pile after pile of pirate loot collapsed and exploded just behind Mungo, Noop, and the droids as they ran toward the spacedock. The explosions reached the engine room—and the engines of the monster ship broke down! Alarms sounded throughout the ship. It began to veer toward the asteroid shoals!


“We’ve got to get off this ship before it hits those shoals!” shouted Mungo. “It’ll go up in flames!”



Finally Mungo, Noop, and the droids reached the space-dock. They piled into a cloudcraft—with half a dozen mupples tagging along—and took off as fast as they could. They escaped just seconds before the monster ship hit the shoals and exploded into smithereens.







Inside the cloucraft Noop directed Mungo to the Umboo lightstation. When they landed there, Noop turned the beacon on and thanked Mungo for his help. "If there's anything I can do for you . . ." said Noop.

"There is, actually," said Mungo. "Can you tell us where the Roon System is?"

"Master Mungo!" cried Threepio in shock. "Don't tell me you're going to continue this crazy search after all we've been through!"

"We have no choice, Threepio!" said Mungo. "This cloucraft won't make it back to Manda. If Roon isn't close by, we're stuck here!"

Noop smiled. "Oh, it's close by, all right. Look!" He pointed as the beacon of the lightstation swept through clouds of dust and illuminated a beautiful emerald-green planet surrounded by moonlets. "Welcome to the Roon System, Mungo!"

Mungo looked at Roon in awe. "We're saved! I'll establish a trade route yet!"



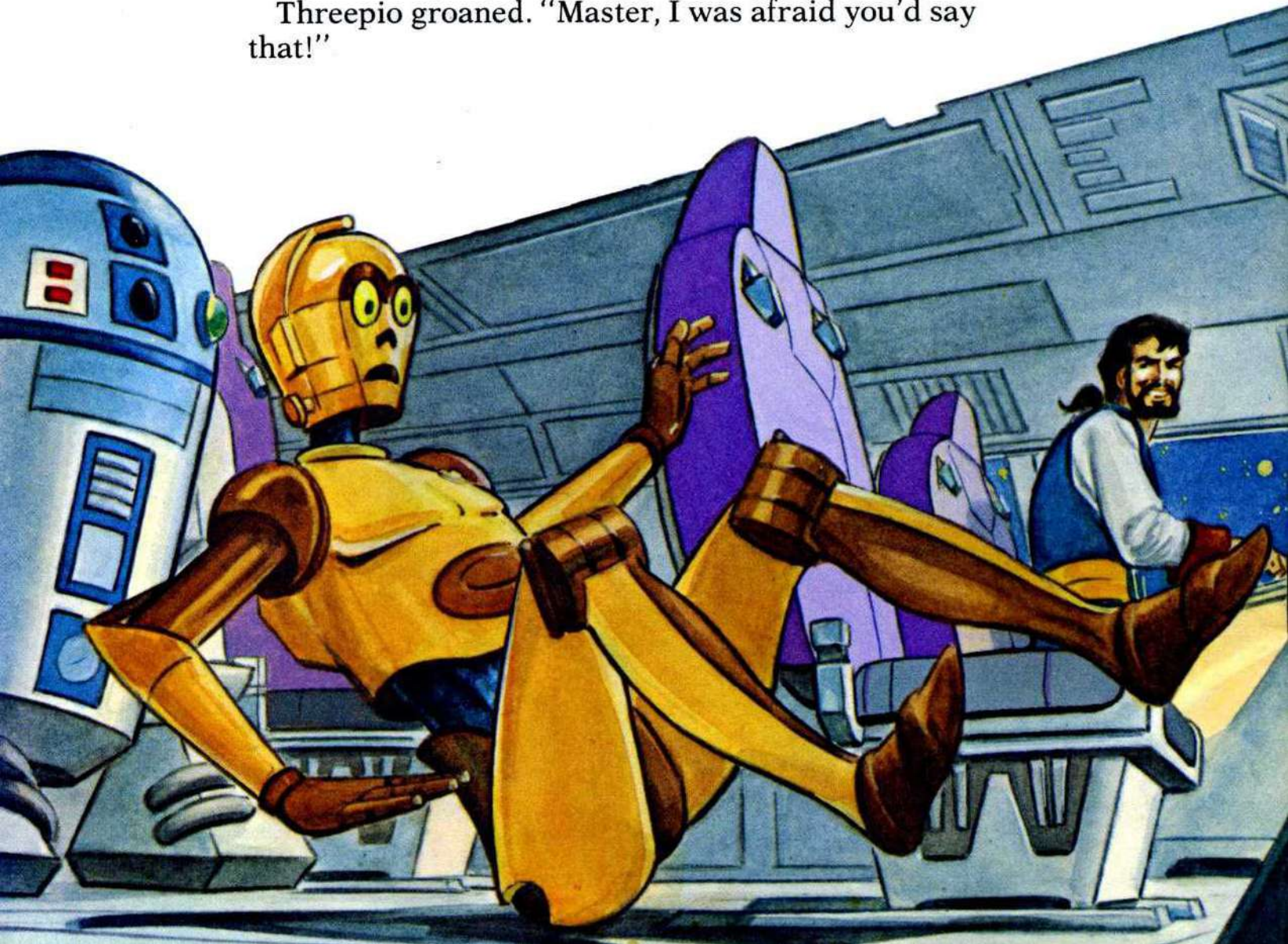
Mungo and the droids piled into the cloudcraft and took off toward Roon.

"I still have a very bad feeling about this, Master Mungo," said Threepio. "But maybe the adventurous part of this expedition is over now."

Mungo swerved to avoid a moonlet and Threepio fell out of his seat with a yelp.

"Somehow, I don't think so, Threepio," said Mungo.

Threepio groaned. "Master, I was afraid you'd say that!"



***Join R2-D2 and C-3PO in these
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***ESCAPE FROM THE MONSTER SHIP
THE PIRATES OF TARNOONGA
THE LOST PRINCE***



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